



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 13, 2006

For Information Contact Public Affairs
WYN HORNBuckle
Telephone: (602) 514-7625
Cell: (602) 525-2681

****DRAFT DRAFT DRAFT****

MASTERMIND OF 1994 MURDER OF DEA AGENT GETS [LIFE IN PRISON]

Vasquez-Mendoza is fourth to be sentenced stemming from 1994 murder of Special Agent Richard Fass

PHOENIX – Agustin Vasquez-Mendoza was sentenced to [life in prison] by Maricopa County Superior Court Judge XXX for the first-degree murder of Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Special Agent Richard E. Fass. The sentencing is the fourth stemming from the June 1994 murder of Special Agent Fass during an undercover operation in Glendale.

Vasquez-Mendoza was convicted by a federal jury in August on a 10-count indictment that included armed robbery, kidnapping, and first-degree murder charges. Evidence at trial proved Vasquez-Mendoza and three associates - Rafael Rubio-Mendez, Juan Vasquez-Rubio and Eduardo Aceves-Vasquez - planned to rob Agent Fass of \$160,000 in cash they believed was for the purchase of methamphetamine. Agent Fass was shot and killed in the course of the robbery. Vasquez-Mendoza managed to evade capture and fled to Mexico whereas the other three co-defendants were arrested, charged and later convicted and sentenced for their part in the murder of SA Fass.

“Twelve years ago this agency was robbed of a brave and talented Special Agent. Twelve years ago a family was robbed of a loving husband and father. Nothing can change that. So today is not a happy day, but it is a day of hard-fought justice,” said DEA Special Agent in Charge Timothy J. Landrum. “DEA will never forget Richard Fass, and we honor his memory by working tirelessly to put all violent drug traffickers behind bars.”

U.S. Attorney Paul K. Charlton said, “This prosecution will never bring back Agent Fass. But DEA's relentless search for Fass's killers serves as proof that DEA never forgot, and will never forget, a fallen agent. Today we brought justice to those who brought this loss to us. Our thoughts remain with the family of Agent Fass.”

The manhunt for Vasquez-Mendoza - who was placed on the FBI's Top Ten Most-Wanted list - was one of the largest undertaken by both Mexico and the United States. Phoenix DEA Special Agents

-MORE-

immediately began searching for the fugitive while the Glendale Police Department homicide unit initiated their murder investigation against Rafael Rubio-Mendez and Juan Vasquez-Rubio.

Glendale Police Chief Steve Conrad said, "Special Agent Fass made the ultimate sacrifice in an effort to make our community a safer place. We want to assure his family that we will never forget this sacrifice. Our thoughts and prayers are with them today."

Maricopa County Attorney Andrew Thomas stated, "I commend the Drug Enforcement Administration and Glendale Police Department for their professionalism and diligence in bringing this fugitive to justice."

The DEA, FBI and the Department of State offered a reward up to \$2.2 million for his arrest, which took place on July 9, 2000 in the State of Puebla, Mexico. Vasquez-Mendoza was later extradited to the United States on January 29, 2005.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Kevin Rapp and Keith Vercauteren, both of whom are cross-deputized as Special Deputy County Attorneys were responsible for the prosecution of Vasquez-Mendoza.

Agencies involved in this investigation include DEA, FBI, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, U.S. Marshal's Service, Maricopa County Attorney's Office, Maricopa County Sheriff's Office, Glendale Police Department, Phoenix Police Department and law enforcement authorities in Mexico.

For interviews with the Fass family, please contact DEA Public Information Officer, Ramona Sanchez at (602) 664-5725.

CASE NUMBER: CR1994-006023 (Maricopa County Superior Court)

RELEASE NUMBER: 2006-238(Vasquez-Mendoza)

#